



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## VABHHCS TO HOST FOUR CHAPLAINS MEMORIAL SERVICE

The VA Black Hills Health Care System will be hosting a Four Chaplains Memorial Service at 1:30 pm (MT) on Sunday, February 9, at the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Sturgis (1049 Howard Street).

Speakers will share the story of the Four Chaplains and local Veteran organizations will participate in the event by placing wreaths at the altar during the program.

Immediately following the service, the public is invited to a chili feed to be served at the Sturgis Veterans Club (868 Main Street) in Sturgis. This event marks the beginning of National Salute to Veteran Patients.

The Four Chaplains Memorial Service honors four Army Chaplains - Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. John P. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Clark V. Poling, Reformed Church of America. Four men of different faiths, on a rapidly sinking ship, who gave their life jackets and lives so that younger soldiers might survive when the USS Dorchester was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine on February 3, 1943.



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**What's on your menu for the Super Bowl?**



# PRESIDENT TRUMP SIGNS MEMORIALIZING VETERANS ACT INTO LAW

U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) made the following statement after legislation he introduced with Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) was signed into law by President Trump this week. The new law will establish a grant program to help honor the lives of our nation's veterans.

"I thank President Trump for signing into law our bipartisan bill that establishes a grant program to honor veterans' legacies," said Rounds. "Sharing veterans' stories of service and sacrifice is one way we can encourage the next generation to join the armed forces. Many South Dakotans have proudly served our country, and our legislation will help to preserve their memories so students and communities can learn more about their service and the sacrifices they made for the United States."

"The American Legion is proud to support efforts to properly memorialize America's veterans and educate future generations on the legacy of our nation's heroes. It is imperative that we continue to invest in programs that honor and preserve the memory of America's veterans. The American Legion thanks Senators Tester and Rounds for sponsoring and shepherding this legislation to the president's desk," said Ralph P. Bozella, Chairman of The American Legion Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission.

"Perpetuating the memory and history of our dead is one of the VFW's founding principles," said Carlos Fuentes, Director National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). "The Veterans Legacy Program ensures the memories and stories of the brave men and women who have worn our nation's uniform are preserved in perpetuity. This law will ensure the Veterans Legacy Program is expanded so more veterans can have their stories digitized and preserved for the benefit of future generation."

The Veterans Legacy Program is an educational initiative from the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) under U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) which commemorates veterans interred in NCA cemeteries through partnerships with institutions of higher learning. Previously, institutions of higher education experienced difficulty obtaining and utilizing federal funding through this program.

The Senators' *Memorializing Veterans Act* establishes a grant program to administer funds more efficiently through the Veterans Legacy Program, facilitating research and developing educational tools to increase public awareness of veteran service and sacrifice.

The *Memorializing Veterans Act* makes grants available to recipients such as institutions of higher learning, local education agencies, and non-profit entities with a history of community engagement. These grants are available for research related to national, State or Tribal veterans' cemeteries, to produce educational materials or to promote community engagement about the history of the veterans interred at those cemeteries.

Full text of the bill can be found [HERE](#).

# AHA PRAISES VA GENETIC RESEARCH

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) earned national recognition for its impact on heart disease and stroke science in [VA studies](#) published in 2019.

The American Heart Association (AHA) lauded the research as top examples of how gene studies expand knowledge.

The studies were based on the VA's [Million Veteran Program](#) (MVP) landmark research effort. MVP is a national research program to learn how genes, lifestyle and military exposures affect health and illness.

"This acknowledgment is a testament to the scientific and medical impact of VA research," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "More than 30 studies are underway that use MVP data, and the work is expected to lead to many advances in health care for veterans and all Americans."

One of the studies focused on [peripheral artery disease](#), a common circulatory problem in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to limbs. The other study looked at [venous thromboembolism](#), in which a blood clot forms in the deep veins of the leg, groin or arm and travels in circulation, lodging in the lungs.

Both studies pinpointed gene targets that could lead to new drugs to treat the conditions, which affect millions of veterans and other Americans.

MVP-based studies focus on topics including PTSD, suicide prevention, heart disease and diabetes. Findings from several studies have appeared in high-impact medical and scientific journals. More than 800,000 Veterans are already enrolled in MVP, and the recent launch of [online enrollment](#) has made it easier for more Veterans to take part.

AHA has recognized other major advances in which the VA played a role. They included a [major finding on blood pressure control](#) and a [study](#) using smartwatches to warn of irregular heartbeats.

# CLARK COUNTY NAMES LEWIS AS COUNTY VSO

Clark County has selected Darin Lewis as their county veterans service officer. Darin served in the United States Army for 21 years and retired as LTC.

Darin's office hours are 9:00 am—4:00 pm on Mondays and 9:00 am—12:00 pm on Thursdays. His office phone number is: 605-532-5435 and his email address is: [clarkvso@itctel.com](mailto:clarkvso@itctel.com).

Please join us in welcoming Darin to the SDDVA network.



# VA LAUNCHES DIABETES CAMPAIGN TO HELP VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a new campaign this month to give veterans a better understanding of their diabetes numbers, which are critical to their well-being.

The Understand Your Diabetes Numbers campaign educates veterans and their families on hemoglobin A1C, glucose meter, blood pressure and kidney tests, and other vital measurements.



“One in four veterans enrolled in VA health care services has diabetes,” said VA Secretary Robert Willkie. “This public health campaign encourages veterans to be proactive with their health care teams by improving their understanding of diabetes test results. The campaign reflects the VA’s ongoing commitment to improve the health care experiences of veterans by empowering them to be

active partners in their care.”

[VA’s Office of Patient Care Services](#) is overseeing the year-long campaign, which addresses treatment goals, medication and nutritional management, and patient safety. Key topics include understanding the importance of hemoglobin A1c test results, shared decision making between veterans and their health care team, [hypoglycemia safety](#), insulin differences, good nutrition and carbohydrate counting, and kidney function and blood pressure measurement. [Hemoglobin A1c \(HbA1c\)](#) is a marker, along with blood pressure and cholesterol control, of good diabetes care.

VA’s diabetes campaign is guided by Choosing Wisely® which is a collective effort among professional societies whose goal is to reduce medical tests, treatments, and procedures that may be unnecessary. For more information, watch the VA roundtable videos [Diabetes is a Disease of Numbers](#) and [Healthcare Teams Helping Veterans Understand Diabetes Numbers](#).



# UPDATED DOD LIST IDENTIFYING AGENT ORANGE SITES OUTSIDE OF VIETNAM

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released in January an updated Department of Defense (DOD) list of [locations outside of Vietnam](#) where tactical herbicides were used, tested or stored by the United States military.

"This update was necessary to improve accuracy and communication of information," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA depends on DOD to provide information regarding in-service environmental exposure for disability claims based on exposure to herbicides outside of Vietnam."

DOD conducted a thorough review of research, reports and government publications in response to a [November 2018 Government Accountability Office report](#).

"DOD will continue to be responsive to the needs of our interagency partners in all matters related to taking care of both current and former service members," said Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper. "The updated list includes Agents Orange, Pink, Green, Purple, Blue and White and other chemicals and will be updated as verifiable information becomes available."

Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits, including an [Agent Orange Registry health exam](#), health care and disability compensation for diseases associated with exposure. Their dependents and survivors also may be eligible for benefits.

# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH DONATES TO MJFSVH

The First Congregational Church in Pierre presented Secretary Whitlock with a \$750 donation for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home Endowment Fund.

These funds were raised from their annual pheasant feed, an event hosted annually at their church. Their donation was given in memory of George Summerside who used to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs.





## **Veterans Benefits Fair & Town Hall**

**January 30, 2020**

**4:00 p.m.**

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**Sioux Falls VA Health Care System**

**Primary Care Lobby**

**2501 W. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street**

**Sioux Falls, SD**

**Town Hall starts at 5:00 p.m.**





## MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT DAY OF GIVING



On Tuesday, March 24, 2020, participating Culver's restaurants in Iowa and South Dakota will donate 10% of sales to Midwest Honor Flight.

The mission: to fly WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans to see their memorials in Washington, DC.

Enjoy a delicious meal, benefit a great cause and feel good all over!  
A representative of the Midwest Honor Flight will be present at each location from 5-8pm.

Thank you for your support.

**IOWA**

Culver's of Sioux Center  
Culver's of Sioux City - Hamilton Blvd.

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Culver's of Rapid City locations  
Culver's of Mitchell  
Culver's of Yankton  
Culver's of Aberdeen  
Culver's of Sioux Falls locations  
Culver's of Spearfish



culvers.com

Fourteen Culver's in South Dakota and Northwest Iowa are committing 10% of their entire days sales on Tuesday, March 24! Donations and this 10% will go towards 2020 Midwest Honor Flights.

This will be the third year for this regional partnership. Over the last two years, more than \$25,000 has been raised to support our veterans on these flights.

Midwest Honor Flight representatives will be present at each location from 5-8 PM to answer questions to those interested in learning more about MHF's mission.



# LAKE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE OFFERING VA TELEHEALTH SERVICES

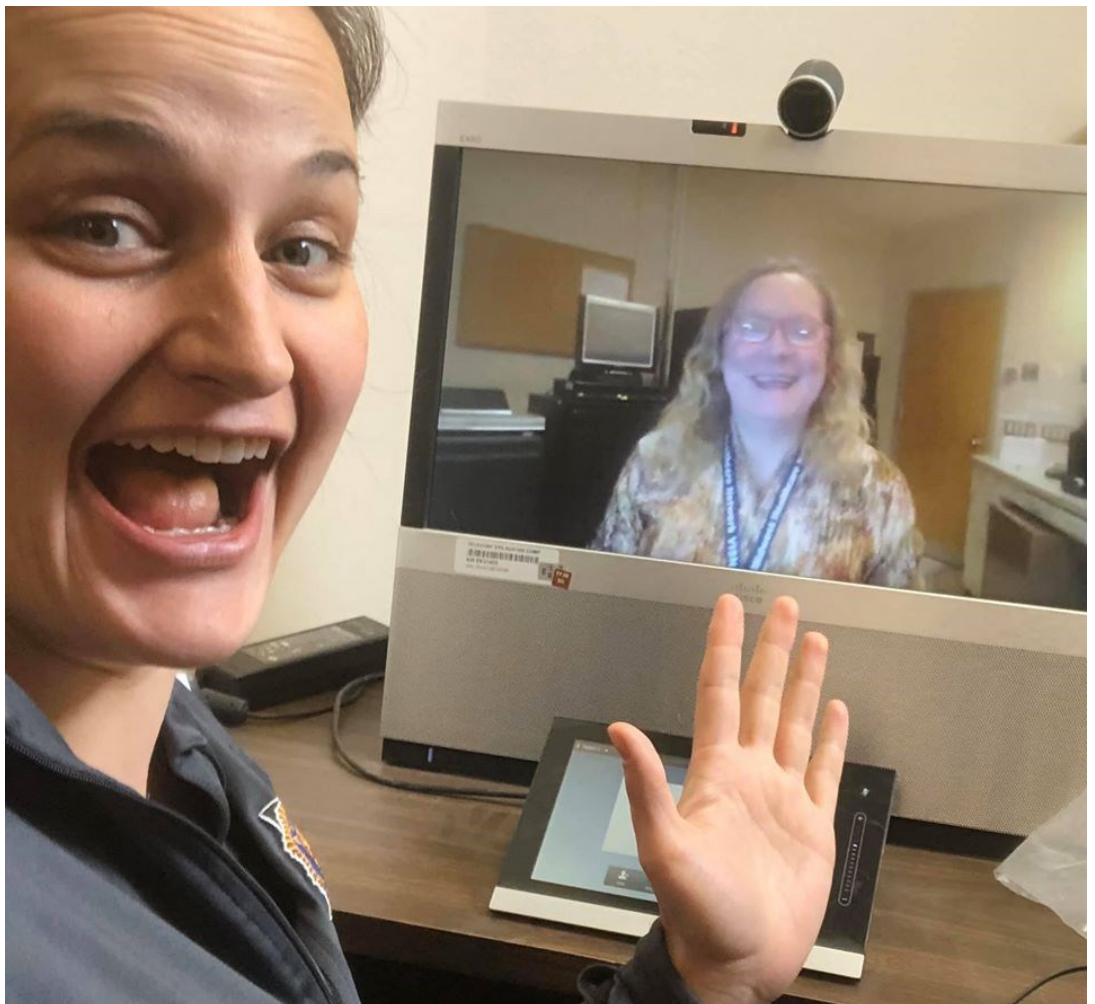
KUDOS and HATS OFF to Lake County Veterans Service Officer Courtney VanZanten. Thanks to VanZanten's leadership and guidance, her office can now afford veterans the opportunity to participate in VA Telehealth.

Veterans in Lake County, seeking regular care through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), now have the option to stay in town to receive many of the services that they have traveled to Sioux Falls and beyond to receive previously.

VA Telehealth facilities have been in pilot for some time around the country, but veterans in Beadle and Lake County now can make a simple trip to the county courthouse to speak over video conference to a VA doctor rather than driving long distance for the same appointment.

The goal of the VA's Anywhere-to-Anywhere initiative in healthcare delivery is to allow veterans to access their primary care and mental health providers via mobile or web-based service.

VA Telehealth Services is transforming how veterans access high-quality, making it easier for veterans to connect with their VA care team.







Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

North Central Chapter

*Giving Hope by Giving Back*

*Bingo Fundraiser*

*For the*

*Paralyzed Veterans of America*

*North Central Chapter*

*“PVA Awareness Day”*

*Saturday, April 25, 2020*

*4:30 – 5:00 p.m. – visit our Booth!*

*5:15 – 5:45 p.m. – purchase your Bingo Packet!*

*Burnside Bingo, 1605 W. Burnside St., Sioux Falls, SD*



*Come join us for a great evening of socializing and play some bingo! Food will be available through the concession stand and free popcorn will be available throughout the evening!*

*Make it a FUN family event and bring your kids!!!*



Paralyzed Veterans of America are participating in numerous events in April in an effort to raise awareness/

On April 2nd, PVA/DAV will be hosting their Annual Pizza Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Education Bldg. at the Sioux Falls VA.

The other event will be a Bingo event! This will be held on Saturday, April 25, at Burnside Bingo.

# ADAPTIVE SPORTS GRANTS AVAILABLE

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is accepting applications through March 17 for up to \$15 million in grants for civic groups providing adaptive sports and therapeutic recreational opportunities to veterans and members of the armed forces with disabilities.

Application instructions and eligibility information for these grants — which will help qualified organizations plan, develop, manage and implement these programs — are available at [VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program](#).

“Built on VA clinical expertise and operations, with essential support from community partners, the adaptive sports grant program allows the VA to extend its level of care beyond the clinical setting,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We are pleased to offer grant funds to community organizations as it means there will be more veterans engaging in the challenge of sports and more veterans who are exposed to new skills for healthier living.”

In 2019, the VA awarded \$14.9 million in adaptive sports grants to 126 organizations, estimated to serve more than 11,000 veterans and service members from every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Of the total awarded, \$1.5 million is being used to assist organizations that offer [equine-assisted therapy](#) to support mental health.

All applications must be submitted to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 8 p.m. EST, March 17. VA will announce awards based on a competitive selection in fall 2020.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 30—SFVAHCS Veterans Fair and Town Hall—SFVAHCS Primary Care Lobby—4:00 pm (MT)  
 Feb 5—SFVAHCS Art Show—Sioux Falls VA Medical Center Chapel—3rd Floor—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)  
 Feb 9—VABHHCS Four Chaplains Service—St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church—Sturgis (1049 Howard Street) -  
 1:30 pm (MT)  
 Feb 10—State American Legion Legislative Reception—AL Post 8—Pierre—5:30—8:00 pm (CT)  
 Feb 11—USDA BHNH Veterans Hiring Event—Mystic Ranger District Office (8221 Mt. Rushmore Road) Rapid  
 City—3:00—5:00 pm (MT) and 8:00—10:00 pm (MT)  
 Feb 21-23—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center—  
 Oacoma  
 Mar 4—VABHHCS Art Show—Fort Meade VA Campus—Building 145 Classroom 109—1:00 pm (MT)  
 Mar 6—Drop-In Legal Service for Veterans—DAV Sioux Falls Chapter—1519 W. 51st Street—9:00 am—  
 3:00 pm (CT)  
 Mar 11—VABHHCS Art Show—Hot Springs VA Campus—Building 1 Rotunda—1:00 pm (MT)  
 Mar 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
 Mar 25—SD Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
 Mar 27-29—SD Vietnam and Era Veterans Reunion—Dakota Sioux Casino—Watertown  
 May 8—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
 May 12—8th Annual WWII Veterans Luncheon—TREA Building—Rapid City—11:00 am (MT)  
 May 15-17—DAV State Convention—Brookings  
 May 21-22—PVA Annual Fishing Tournament—Chamberlain  
 May 25—MJFSVH Memorial Day Car Show—MJFSVH Campus—Hot Springs—11:30 am—3:00 pm (MT)  
 May 30—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 7  
 June 3-7—VFW State Convention—Aberdeen  
 Jun 18-21—American legion State Convention—Huron  
 Jul 10—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Bldg. 145—Room 108—Fort Meade VAMC—10:00 am (MT)  
 Aug 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota Conference Center—Pierre  
 Sep 3—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair  
 Sep 3-7—SD State Fair  
 Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 8 (Tentative)  
 Sep 11—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
 Oct 11—Midwest Honor Flight—Mission 9 (Tentative)  
 Nov 13—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs VAMC—10:00 am (MT)

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